

Workers on Panama Canal Are Best Paid Men of All the World

Culebra, Canal Zone, Panama.

THIS letter is about the biggest army of workmen ever gotten together. I refer to the men who are now digging the canal down here at Panama. They number about 35,000. When old Cheops built the pyramids he had 20,000 laborers, and when the great church of Santa Sophia was erected at Constantinople the workmen were just half that number. But in both of these cases the labor was more or less forced, and the pyramid fellahs worked like the Israelites under the lash of the taskmaster. The laborers here are free agents. They can lay off if they please, and they are only kept on the job by getting the highest wages and best treatment of any men of their kind upon earth.

The man in charge of this army is the chief quartermaster at Panama. His name is Colonel C. A. Devol, and he is an officer of the regular army. He has not only recruited and hired the labor, but he provides their houses and quarters and gives them their wages. He is also in charge of all materials and supplies on the Isthmus, having eighty-eight warehouses, which together would cover an acreage bigger than that of a good-sized farm. He has charge of the docks and mails and he does the delivering and totting about of almost everything and everybody except that done by the cars.

Uncle Sam's Big Labor Force.

Colonel Devol tells me that the labor problem has been one of the most difficult of any connected with the canal, and that it is the worst of any company which has done business down here on the Isthmus. When the Panama railroad was first built the contractors sent to China for laborers, and they died like flies. Later on so many other workmen were buried that it is said the road cost a man for every tie laid in its tracks. The first French canal company scratched the world to find diggers, and they buried a large part of those whom they found. The men would not stay and they were always recruiting. Uncle Sam has had good labor ever since he began his construction and the job has become so popular that he can now have all the men he needs without advertising. During the past four years the average number employed has been 35,000, although at times it has run as high as 38,000 and more. This is an enormous force to be used in any undertaking outside those connected with the army and navy, but it is handled like one vast machine.

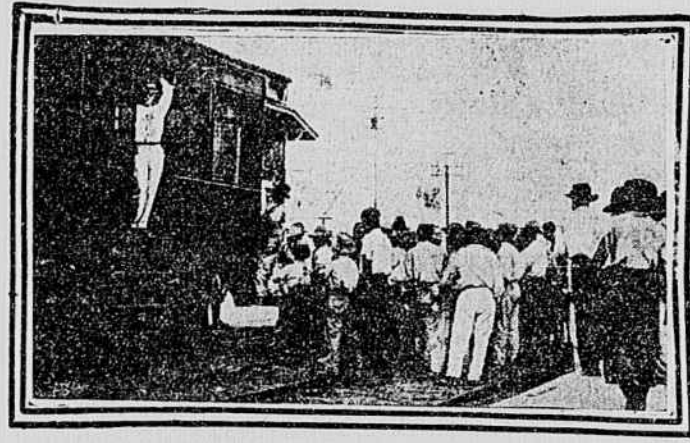
Live and Gold Men.

You have all heard of the silver and gold men of the Isthmus of Panama. It is under those two names that the men are classified. The silver man is the common every-day lifer of earth, hewer-of-wood and drawer-of-water. He has a mighty small brain and sells only his muscle. He is usually a white Spaniard or an Italian, or a black man from one of the West Indian islands. He is hired by the authorities here on the Isthmus, and has been recruited by agents sent to different parts of the world. During the past four years we have had on the average of 25,000 of these in the shape of West Indian negroes, and about 5,000 more as laborers from Europe.

The gold men are the skilled employees, those who act as superintendents, foremen, civil engineers and mechanics. They manage the big machinery, run the trains and do all the skilled work. They are hired through the bureau at Washington and many of them are subject to civil service examinations. The silver man gets from 50 cents to \$1.80 a day for his nine hours work. The gold man receives on the average at least \$150 per month, and, in addition, a six-



COLONEL C. A. DEVOL, the chief quartermaster, with Mr. Carpenter at the left. This man hires and houses Uncle Sam's labor army.



AT THE PAY CAR.

weeks vacation, with a month of sick leave and one of injury leave, which brings his pay very much higher. He has also extra advantages in the way of quarters and housing, and he is in short about the best treated workman of all those who sell their brains and muscle to the industrial world.

A Talk With Col. Devol.

But it will be more interesting to let Colonel Devol, the quartermaster

in charge of these forces, tell you about them. I have spent an afternoon with him here at Culebra and have asked him many questions as to the men and their work.

"One was as to the trouble of getting the laborers together," said Col. Devol. "The organization of the canal force was not an easy one. When we took hold, Panama had a bad name and it was difficult to get men. November



JAMAICA NEGROES AT WORK ON THE NEW PANAMA RAILROAD.



SILVER LABORERS FROM NORTH SPAIN.

1, 1904, the total force was 3,500, of whom only 600 were Americans. We had considerable sickness and this force was not permanent, although it steadily grew. In numbers, it was made up largely of men who would stay only a few months and then go away. Nevertheless, it steadily grew. We found a large amount of recruiting was necessary, and within the next year or so we brought in over 13,000 silver men. Of these more than 11,000 came from Europe, about 15,000 from Barbadoes and the balance from the other islands of the West Indies and Columbia.

"We had labor agents at Paris who did the recruiting from Spain, getting about 500 laborers at a time and sending them over. We had to advance the money and it actually cost us \$10 per man for every Spaniard, although that sum was returned to the government in the first two wage payments. "It cost us \$7.25 per head for the laborers from the West Indies. This sum was not paid back, but was charged to the expense account. When I arrived here in 1908 we still had recruiting agencies in Barbadoes, Trinidad, France and the United States. But we need nothing of this character now. Indeed, we are offered more labor than we can use and we are sending men back home rather than bringing them here."

"How about Central and South America? Have those countries furnished much labor to the canal?" I asked.

"No," replied Colonel Devol. "We recently brought in forty or fifty Paraguayans and paid them 20 cents an hour. But as a rule our labor has come from the sources I have mentioned."

The Spaniard vs. the West Indian Negro.

Here the question arose as to the efficiency of European cheap labor in comparison with the West Indian labor, and Colonel Devol said:

"We are, you know, paying the Spaniards more than the West Indians. We fixed the wages at the beginning of the work, estimating the Spanish labor as worth two and a half times that of the Jamaican. We then established a rate of 20 cents gold per hour for the Spaniards, and 10 cents per hour for the Jamaicans. As the work has progressed the most of the men on the canal believe that the Spaniard has only stood pat, while the negro has steadily gained in efficiency, and it is my own belief that the negro is now about as good as the Spaniard, although he still receives less pay. Indeed, my respect for this negro labor has risen during every year of my stay. The West Indians are teachable and anxious to learn. I use many of them as mule drivers, and although they were at first very poor, they are now as good as any in the country."

The White Man and the Tropics.

"But cannot the negroes stand the sun of the tropics better than the white men?"

"I think not. The white man can work here quite as well as the colored man. The Americans are perfectly healthy, and I see no reason why they should not work here all their lives. It is different in the Philippines. The heat there is more intense and more enervating. When I went to those islands I weighed 150 pounds, and I lost something like eighteen pounds during my stay. Here I find it difficult to keep my weight down, and my health is excellent."

"There has been much misapprehension as to the unhealthiness of the tropics and the local heat," continued Colonel Devol. "This is so as to both animals and men. When we took possession of the Philippines we tried to acclimate our mules. At first I kept them under canvas during the heat of the day for fear the sun would hurt them. I soon found this useless, and after a short time put them to work as soon as they came off the boats. I distributed thousands

of them throughout the islands, and they thrive there quite as well as at home.

"As to the Americans of the Isthmus, you will not find a healthier class of workmen anywhere else. Their death rate is exceedingly low, and far lower than that of the United States. Even including the colored labor, we find that our death and health rates are quite as low as those of most other parts of the world."

The Negroes and the Whites.

"How about order? Do you have much trouble in keeping the colored men in check?"

"No, I doubt whether you will find a more quiet body of workmen anywhere else on the face of the globe. We have more than 30,000 colored men on our rolls, and we have had no serious labor trouble since we began. There are no brawls and no drunkenness to speak of, and the men are universally polite and respectful to the Americans. Nearly every silver man you meet takes off his hat, and it is a common expression among the West Indians that this is a white man's country."

But are our white women safe on the Isthmus?

"As far as the West Indian negroes are concerned, they are perfectly safe. They can go about as freely as in any part of the United States. My own daughters have been here every summer. They ride all over the country without an escort, and they have never had any trouble of any kind. Indeed, I have not known of a single case down here where a negro has molested a white woman."

How do the wages of the silver men compare with those they receive at home?

"They are much higher. The Jamaicans and Barbadians get three times as much as at home. They have also free quarters and their food is furnished at the rate of 9 cents a meal. The Spaniard gets more than twice what he can make in Spain, and his meals cost him only 40 cents per day. We have good quarters for housing the Spaniards, and we have barracks for the negroes with canvas beds which can be raised and lowered. These beds are kept clean and are steamed every few days."

"We find that the Jamaicans prefer to have huts of their own, and many of them have drifted out into the brush. They have knocked up shacks of poles and such boards as they can find and have brought their families to live with them. A year or so ago we had 25,000 negroes in our barracks, but we have now only 7,000, and the number grows less every day."

How about the Spaniards? Do they hold to their quarters?

"Yes, and the same is true of the Italians."

Americans at Panama.

"Are the Americans on the Isthmus satisfied with their jobs?"

"I think there is no doubt of that. You will find kickers everywhere, but the most of the Americans are contented and their only regret is that the job is coming to an end. Indeed, they ought to be satisfied. They get the biggest wages of their kind and receive on the average from 25 to 50 per cent more than they could get in the States. Every man of them has six weeks' vacation, and those who need it thirty days' sick leave. They are hard workers, but they have plenty of recreation, including tournaments and games and a system of clubhouses which is free. They have a reduced rate of living through the commissary stores, where goods are sold at as near cost as possible, and Uncle Sam pays their house rent and gives them their quarters. The gold men work only eight hours a day, and those who are married have, in addition, what amounts to \$10 a month outside their salary. The bachelors

have what is an equivalent of about \$15 per month.

What Canal Employees Get for Nothing.

"I do not understand just what you mean by these allowances, Colonel Devol."

"I mean the things that the canal employes get for nothing, which, if he were in the United States, he would have to pay for. We give every man free quarters and free fuel, light, water and medical attendance. The married man receives more than the single man, and he costs more. He lives in a house which costs us at least \$1,810 to build and furnish, and he saves at least \$20 in the rent of that house. He gets about \$7.50 worth of free medical attendance, \$1 in free transportation over the railroad, more than \$5 in free light, and more than \$3 worth of fuel. We take care of his grounds and carry away his garbage. We do not charge him for janitor service, and altogether \$10 is a low estimate of what he has in addition to his salary. In the same way the bachelor receives \$11 or \$15 in addition to his pay."

Uncle Sam's Homes for Employees.

"You have charge of the homes of the employes?"

"Yes, that is, under the quartermaster's department. Our houses, as you know, are all modern and up-to-date. They are screened from mosquitoes and furnished with modern plumbing and bath rooms, and each house has its kitchen, parlor, bed rooms and living room. Men who get less than \$200 per month live in four-family houses. Those who have between that and \$300 have bungalows and cottages, and those who have from \$300 to \$100 a month have two-story houses."

The barrack buildings of the silver employes each accommodate seventy-two men. Their arrangements are modeled after those of the United States transports, and they are each under charge of a janitor, who keeps them clean. The floors are scrubbed out and bedded in an iron tank to kill the bugs and other vermin."

"Have you been able to use many of the old French buildings?" I asked.

"Yes, there were 1,700 of them, and we took them at a valuation of \$2,000,000. They ranged in size from two-story cottages up to the big De Lesseps home at Cristobal. A great many of these buildings are in use to-day. They gave us homes at the start, which was a very important consideration to our work."

Our Men Earn Their Wages.

The conversation here turned to the pay of the men, and Colonel Devol showed me the books by which he keeps track of the labor of these 35,000 employes. The system is a complete one, including timebooks for odd days and extra days, so that the men in the office can check off the time and still have the time books in use.

Everything is done by system, and it is impossible for a man to get more than he earns. The paying is through pay checks by means of pay cars, which go from station to station and hand out the money. It takes twelve days to pay all the men on the canal. A pay car starts out about the first of the month, and it is not until the 12th that all the men have been paid. The amount of silver used every month is more than one and a half million dollars, or 17 1/2 times loaded upon two horse wagons, or as much as eighty horses could haul in a counter road.

The Gun-Shoe Men.

I asked Colonel Devol if any stealing or graft had been discovered in connection with such payments. He replied:

"This is the cleanest job that Uncle Sam has ever undertaken. We have had scandals in the Philippines, in Cuba and more or less in the administration of almost every one of our home cities. I know of none here

on the Canal Zone, and our system of supervision is so complete that it is almost impossible for anything of that nature to escape being caught at its very beginning.

"Take, for instance, padding the rolls, such as has been done in many big jobs. There is none of that here. We have line inspectors called gumshoe men, who go about through the various divisions in ordinary clothing. No one knows them, and they have the right to ask their foremen for their time-books and verify them as to the men employed and the hours that they work. Any discrepancy is immediately reported. These men are everywhere, and the foremen know that a dishonest report is sure to be discovered."

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WINCHESTER

(Special to The Times-Dispatch.)

Winchester, Va., June 29.—Cards have been received here announcing the marriage of Miss Love Fry, daughter of Mrs. Nannie N. Fry, formerly of Middleway, Jefferson county, W. Va., to Dr. John Daniel, also of that county, which was solemnized on June 25 at the home of the bride's mother, No. 1200 Fairmont Street, Washington, D. C.

Mrs. Samuel P. Latane left this week to spend some time at Old Point Comfort, and will also visit her sisters, Mrs. W. Rice on North Braddock Street, has returned to Baltimore.

Midshipman Richard Evelyn Byrd, Jr., of the United States Navy, who is spending his vacation at the home of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. R. E. Byrd, in this city, has been spending the week in Baltimore with friends.

D. B. Conrad left a few days ago to spend some time in Baltimore.

Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Sprigg, who have been visiting relatives in town, have returned to Cumberland, Md.

Mrs. Mary J. Bowers has gone on a visit to relatives at Bedington, W. Va. Announcement was made a few days ago of the marriage of Miss Virginia Chapman, daughter of Charles Chapman, of Berryville, Clark county, to R. R. Rumbarger, of Grottoes, which took place last Sunday at the home of the bride's father, the ceremony being performed by Rev. S. A. Parker, pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The young couple will live at Grottoes.

Miss Eva Livers, who has been visiting at the home of her brother-in-law and sister, Mr. and Mrs. Fred S. Anderson, on South Main Street, has returned to Grottoes.

Mrs. Rachel Bean and her daughter, Miss Lottie Bean, of McPherson, Kas., are visiting the family of the former's brother-in-law, Joseph F. Bean, in this city.

Mrs. G. Casper, Fries and her daughter-in-law, Mrs. Charles Fries, have gone to Berkeley Springs, W. Va., where they will spend some time.

Mr. and Mrs. D. C. Sands, of Middleburg, have been visiting friends in town this week.

Mr. and Mrs. T. J. Se-utt, of Washington, who have been on a motoring trip in the Virginia Valley, were the guests of friends in this city early in the week.

Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Paine, of Indiana, Pa., came this week on a visit to friends.

Mr. and Mrs. Del Drago, of Redkey, Ind., have been visiting at the home of the latter's mother, Mrs. Annie Sartelle, in this city. Mr. Drago, being one of the assistant sergeants-at-arms of the Democratic National Convention in Baltimore this week.

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Glass and Dr. Robert McC. Glass have been spending the past week in Baltimore and Washington as the guests of Senator and Mrs. Henry L. Myers and their daughter, Miss Myers, of Montana.

Miss Anna Dickinson, who has come to Richmond, after visiting at the home of her brother-in-law and sister, Dr. and Mrs. J. H. Lacy, in this city.

Dr. and Mrs. A. A. Westra, of Middleburg, W. Va., have been visiting the latter's parents, Dr. and Mrs. E. B. Smoke, in Frederick county.

Mr. and Mrs. John Shoemaker, of Greensburg, Pa., who have been visiting Mr. and Mrs. Ross M. Swinley, have gone to Berkeley Springs, W. Va.

Mrs. James W. Gaver, who has been visiting relatives in town, has returned to her home at Berryville.

Miss Clara Weems left this week to visit friends in Baltimore.

Mrs. Sarah Brooks has gone on a visit of several weeks to relatives in Washington.

Miss Maude Brown is visiting friends in Baltimore.

Mrs. D. L. Clayton, who has been visiting relatives here for several weeks, has returned to her home in Cumberland, Md.

CUMBERLAND

(Special to The Times-Dispatch.)

Cumberland, Va., June 29.—Miss Rebecca Vaughan is taking a summer course at the University of Virginia.

Mrs. Glimm, of the University of Virginia, will spend the summer months with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Philip Flippin, on Colonial Avenue.

Mrs. Henry Lester, of Sheffield, Ala., and Mrs. Sue W. Jolly, of Birmingham, Ala., are guests of Mrs. Alan McCracken.

Miss Constance Anderson, of Richmond, has returned home, after a ten-day visit to Mrs. Chas. Diggs.

Miss Muttie Hatten, of Smithfield, is the guest of Miss Beale Stuart.

Miss Eleanor Ford Diggs has been spending some weeks in Richmond.

Mr. and Mrs. Andrew J. Gray, of Richmond, were the weekend guests of Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Gay, of "Northfield."

Misses Elise and Marjorie Flippin, of Farmville, are visiting Mrs. Oliver G. Flippin.

Frank Hill Carpenter has returned to his home in Madison, after some months spent here.

The Misses Sneed, of Fork Union, are visiting Mrs. J. Raleigh Godsey.

Dr. Richard Jeffries is staying at the "Red Rose Inn."

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There are jet-trimmed black suedes, richly hued satins with hand-worked designs in beads, Velvet Slippers of all shades, elegant patent leather styles set off with jet—the broadest possible range! Not every size in all models, of course, but a splendid selection for every foot. You may choose from them all Monday at only—

\$3.00 White Canvas Pumps	\$4.00 White Nubuck Pumps	\$10.00 Gold and Silver Pumps
Special lot of real \$3 quality Flat Ribbon Bow Pumps, clean-cut style, aristocratic in appearance, hand-turned sole, Cuban heel—	A special purchase from our best makers brings these choice Lingerie Pumps at a price never before offered. Flat ribbon bow, custom collar edge—	For the first time in history we offer these \$10 Slippers at a reduction, completing the sensationally attractive character of this sale "for completing your going-away wardrobe."
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